United Nations A/59/424

General Assembly

Distr.: General
8 October 2004

Original: English

Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 8
Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items: reports of the General Committee

Letter dated 8 October 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Canada addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Canada is the current Chair of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for Rough Diamonds, adopted at Interlaken, Switzerland, on 5 November 2002. As you may be aware, the General Assembly has been scheduled to debate the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict (agenda item 21), as well as the prevention of armed conflict (agenda item 24) on 1 November 2004.

We welcome the interest of the General Assembly in this matter. However, we request that the debate on the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict be separated from that on the prevention of armed conflict. The decision to combine these two items for debate was made when the timing of the reports for each item was not known. As we understand it, the report for the debate on conflict prevention will not be available until January 2005. The report on conflict diamonds will be available in early November 2004.

The report on conflict diamonds will be prepared by Canada in our capacity as Chair of the Kimberley Process. It will serve as the basis for a resolution which would be most appropriately adopted before the end of Canada's tenure as Chair on 31 December 2004. Given that the report on conflict prevention will not even be released until the new year, when there will be a new Kimberley Process Chair, responsible for next year's report, it is our request that the debates on the two items be split.

Furthermore, there is a concern that addressing the two issues concurrently could lead to the debate on conflict diamonds being overshadowed by the larger debate on conflict prevention, at a time when the Kimberley Process itself is still in its relative infancy.

You also may be aware that in the course of the fifty-eighth session, when Canada was one of the facilitators of General Assembly resolutions 58/126 and 58/316, on revitalization, we were consulted on a proposal to biennialize the conflict diamonds resolution. After consultations with Ottawa and other Kimberley Process participants, we explained, as Chair of the Process, to then General Assembly

04-54415 (E) 111004

President Hunte that the Chair rotates on an annual basis. For that reason, it would be undesirable and difficult to have a biennial reporting/resolution process. We also indicated that it would deny each Chair the ability to report to the international community on the achievements of the Process during its year of office, and both the report itself and the resolution play an important role in this respect.

We would request, therefore, that the debate on the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict be split from the debate on the prevention of conflict, and that the conflict diamonds debate be rescheduled once the report of the Chair has been presented. We would, of course, be sure to inform you of the optimum date for the debate, once we have consulted with our Kimberley Process partners on a draft resolution, and we much appreciate your assistance in this matter.

(*Signed*) Allan **Rock**